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ABSTRACT

The Florida Master Teacher Program has added two new levels of certification for teachers: the associate master teacher and the master teacher. Only the associate master teacher level has meaning during 1984-85 since one must have been an associate master teacher for three years before becoming a master teacher. To become an associate master teacher, the applicant must meet certain eligibility criteria and earn a superior classroom performance evaluation and a superior score on a subject area examination, if one is available. Specific requirements of the program include four years of teaching experience and current full-time employment in a Florida school district. Applicants must score at or above the 75th percentile on both the subject area examination and performance evaluations. Six subject area specialty examinations of the National Teacher Examination are used. Performance evaluation is conducted by the applicant's building principal and one other certified observer. All performance observers are trained and certified in a measurement system that meets stringent criteria determined by the State Board of Education. Merit pay awards are given for both associate and master teacher certification. (JD)

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# The Florida Master Teacher Program

AERA Presentation By
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The Florida Master Teacher Program adds two new levels of certification to the current beginning teacher certification and the regular teacher certification. The new levels are the associate master teacher and the master teacher. Only the associate master teacher level has meaning during 1984-85 as one must have been an associate master teacher for three years before becoming a master teacher.

To become an associate master teacher, the applicant must meet certain eligibility criteria and earn a superior classroom performance evaluation and a superior score on a subject area examination, if one is available.

Over 28,000 applicants are scheduled to take the subject area examination. This represents approximately 80% of the total applicant pool. If a subject area examination is not available in the instructional area of the applicant, a masters degree infield is an acceptable substitute for the subject examination. Infield refers to the current instructional assignment in which the applicant is providing direct instructional service to students over 50% of the time.

The specific requirements of the program include four years of teaching experience and current full time employment on a continuing contract in a Florida school district. In addition, applicants must score at or above the 75th percentile on both the subject area examination and the performance evaluation.

Six subject area speciality examinations of the National Teacher Examination have been validated for use in the Florida Master Teacher Program. The State of Florida has developed thirteen other subject area examinations for use in the program this year.

The performance evaluation is conducted by the applicant's building principal and one other certified observer acceptable to the principal and the applicant. All performance observers must be trained and certified in a measurement system that meets the following stringent criteria in State Board of Education Rule 6A-4.46:

> *The performance observation instruments used in the State Master Teacher Program shall be an element within a performance measurement system. The State Board of Education shall approve the performance measurement system prior to use of the performance observation instruments in the program.*

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1. A Florida school district, a state-supported school, a group of state-supported schools, or a group of school districts shall submit to the Commissioner complete documentation of a performance measurement system.

2. The Commissioner shall appoint a three (3) member team of evaluation experts to review each performance measurement system for compliance with criteria specified in Rule 6A-4.46 (5)(e)3., FAC. None of the team members shall be associated with the development or use of the performance measurement system to be reviewed.

3. The three (3) member team of evaluation experts shall evaluate the performance measurement system for approval or disapproval based on detailed information relating to each element specified below:

   a. A valid knowledge base. An assembled body of information on effective and ineffective performance that is drawn from research on teaching or otherwise proved to be directly and significantly job-related and that provides the basis for all other elements of the performance measurement system.

   b. Behavior indicators. Statements that describe the specific behaviors demonstrated by teachers when their performance conforms to the concept of effective and ineffective teaching as contained in the knowledge base of the performance measurement system.

   c. Normed performance observation instrument. Documentation shall be provided to show the instrument has:

      [1] Content validity. The degree to which the items on the instrument measure effective instruction, as defined by the selected knowledge base.

      [2] Internal consistency. The degree to which items within a measure, group of items, are positively correlated with each other.

      [3] Stability. The extent to which the same trained observers code the same behavior the same way, over time.

      [4] Interrater agreement. The extent to which the different trained observers code the same behaviors in an identical manner.

      [5] Discriminant reliability. The extent to which the same measure, group of items, for different observers on different occasions for the same teachers are correlated.

      [6] Practicality. The extent to which the system permits observer training and data collection within available resources.

*[7] Score norms. The extent to which the performance measurement system provides for the comparison of an earned score with the scores of instructors in the norming population who were in similar instructional situations when the system was used for performance measurement.*

*[8] Behavioral specificity. The extent to which items in the measures are defined in sufficient specificity and behavioral terms that instructional personnel can know when they are producing them during instruction.*

*[9] Factor unidimensionality. The extent to which measures, groups of items, are sufficiently independent.*

*[10] Freedom from bias. The extent to which the measures are free of any bias against any person due to race, ethnicity, sex, religious or other factors unrelated to meritorious teaching.*

*d. Standardized procedures for data collection, data analysis, and evaluation of performance measures.*

*e. Provisions for the preparation and approval of reliable observers.*

*4. The team of evaluation experts shall submit a written report to the Commissioner which includes a recommendation to approve or disapprove the system. If the system is not recommended for approval, the report shall specify the criteria that were not met and the extent of any such discrepancy.*

*5. The State Board of Education shall utilize the report and recommendations of the expert evaluation team in approving or disapproving the system for a given period of time not to exceed three (3) years, and the Commissioner shall notify the school district, the state-supported school, the group of state-supported schools, or the group of school districts of this decision.*

The system used by all but one of Florida's school districts is the Florida Performance Measurement System (FPMS), developed by a coalition of school districts, universities, and the Department of Education.

The FPMS is a comprehensive program for measuring and developing teacher classroom performance. It includes the following key components:

1. a knowledge base on effective teaching behaviors which has been validated by current research;

2. performance observation instruments based upon the knowledge base;

3. an observer training program conducted by certified trainers; and

4. multimedia learning packages for teacher development.

The knowledge component of the FPMS is assembled into six domains of classroom performance: (1) Planning; (2) Management of student Conduct; (3) Instructional Organization and Development; (4) Presentation of Subject Matter; (5) Communication: Verbal and Nonverbal; and (6) Testing: Student Preparation, Administration and Feedback. Each domain consists of concepts, indicators, and principles of effective teaching which are derived from current research. The concepts represent categories of teacher performance; the indicators provide specific instances of performance related to each concept; the principles state the teaching conditions under which specified instructional goals such as increased learning or improved conduct will be achieved. The content validity of the domains was established through review by a panel of nationally recognized experts in research on teaching.

The performance observation component of the system includes two types of instruments: (1) a set of formative observation instruments, and (2) a summative observation instrument. Indicators included on each of the six formative instruments are drawn directly from the domains. The summative instrument is a synthesis of specific indicators from the domains in which teacher behavior is observable: (1) management of student conduct; (2) instructional organization and development; (3) presentation of subject matter; (4) communication; and (5) testing. The instruments and procedures have been demonstrated to be reliable.

The FPMS training component is a comprehensive tri-level training program for preparing university, district, and school level personnel in the use of the system. Training is delivered by a cadre of certified trainers who have demonstrated their knowledge of the research base, reliability in identifying the FPMS indicators of effective teaching behavior, and skills in the delivery of workshops. The training program is designed to instruct the participants in the knowledge base of the FPMS, the use of the formative and summative instruments, analysis of observation data, and the provision of feedback to the teacher regarding the observation.

The teacher development and support component of the FPMS is based on a series of multimedia learning packages. These can be used on an individualized basis to help teachers acquire or improve specific teaching skills contained in the domains of the FPMS. The packages are appropriate for preservice and inservice teacher education.

The state law defines the associate master as one whose classroom performance and subject area knowledge are superior. Superiority is defined as being at or above the 75th percentile on the subject area test and on the classroom evaluation. Any applicant who attains a superior score on both criteria is eligible to be an associate master teacher. The final distribution of scores may result in ties at the 75th percentile. Should this occur the classroom performance measure will be used as the final selection variable. The awards will be made according to the rank ordered list until such time as either the money is expended or all of the applicants scoring above the criterion score have been selected.

The number of associate master teachers is limited by the legislative appropriation. The amount of the associate master teacher award is designed as $3,000 per year. The 1984-85 appropriation limits the number of associate master teachers to a maximum of 6,333. The total number of eligible applicants at this time is approximately 32,000. Since the applicants must score in the upper quartile on both the subject area examination and the performance evaluation, approximately 8,000 applicants will be in the final distribution on the subject area examination and another 8,000 in the distribution on the performance evaluation. The correlation between subject area exam scores and performance evaluation scores is not expected to be very high. We are estimating that less than 4,000 applicants will meet the upper quartile eligibility requirements in both the subject area examination and the performance evaluation.

## Summary and Conclusions

Florida citizens and legislators believe that teachers should receive at least a portion of their salary based on merit. It appears that educators also believe that teachers should receive recognition for superior performance, since almost 40% of Florida's teachers applied for the associate master teacher designation while both teacher unions were encouraging members not to apply.

Both teacher unions have filed litigation against the Master Teacher Program. The AFT affiliate, FEA/United, charged that the program was unconstitutional because it bypassed the local collective bargaining process. A Florida Circuit Court Judge has already ruled against the union in this suit. The Florida NEA affiliate has filed suit covering a number of different administrative and equity issues. In spite of some expected start-up problems during the first year of implementation and the threatened litigation by the teachers' unions in Florida, at least ten other states have legislation currently pending or have passed similar legislation during the 1985 session to establish merit programs for teachers.

Merit pay is not expected to vanish soon. Already some positive spin-offs are evident. Principals and teachers are welcoming the improvements in performance measurement systems. Performance indicators drawn from teacher effectiveness research provide a distinctive and common indicator of teacher effectiveness recognized by both the teacher and principal. Principals feel much more comfortable conducting classroom observations and teacher evaluations. States are working together through organizations such as the Consortium for the Improvement of Teacher Evaluation (CITE) on research and development efforts to improve teacher performance evaluation. Efforts such as these may greatly diminish the critics who say that lack of objectivity will ultimately kill the merit pay programs.